

Scheme Season

by
Jade Ann Brennan

Volume 1:
Dream Cult Utopia
November 2023

For inquiries, email me at jade.a.brennan@gmail.com
Digital version and print-your-own format available at:
<https://archive.org/details/scheme-season-vol1-nov2023>
Share, remix, be inspired. What goes around returns. Art is communal.



A Fox-Crow Variety Studio Production



Scheme Season, vol. 1: Dream Cult Utopia © 2023 by
Jade Ann Brennan is licensed under Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International

Contributors

Words

Jade Ann Brennan

Compositions

Jade Ann Brennan:.....Covers, 16-17, 26-28

Lyndsey Brennan:.....6-7, 10-11

Hope Brennan:.....22-23

Michaela Brennan:.....4-5

Matthew Chern:.....12-13

Mel Cook:.....18

Barry Goldberg:.....24-25

Jenny Hurlburt:.....18-19

Bekah Jones:.....14-15

Julia Rainey:.....8-9

Editor

Jade Ann Brennan

The Dream is an unachievable ideal, to which the American Utopia demands Cultish devotion at the expense of humanity. How does one survive the Dream Cult Utopia? Only through mutual care and solidarity between the exploited.

This zine is a culmination of many years of writing. Several pieces come from the 2023 November PAD (Poem A Day) Chapbook Challenge hosted online by Writer's Digest. I began participating the same year that my then-friend Lyndsey was attempting NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month). I briefly (foolishly) considered joining her after not having written consistently in any college course since sophomore year, but I realized my error and switched to a more achievable goal. Since then, Lyndsey and I have exchanged numerous poems, notes, mixtapes, and intimate moments; we celebrated six years of marriage; I transitioned; and we welcomed our beloved Gabriel to the world. I always told myself I would try to get published, but I'm nothing if not a procrastinator. I wanted to do something special for my thirtieth birthday, but that's a whole year away, so instead I did something for 29 and invited friends and family to create something to accompany my poems. I hope you enjoy their work and mine.

Jade Ann Brennan (they/she)



Table of Contents

Title Page1

Contributors.....2

Table of Contents (Recursive).....3

"Strawberry rhubarb pie slice".....5

"Your hands struggle to get fruit into your mouth".....5

"When I toss you into the air, I catch you".....7

"How much can one body take".....9

"The tendon on my wrist is bulging".....11

"Ghosts".....12-13

"The Dust of the Journey".....15

Maze.....16-17

"Cut!".....19

"Gather the loose buttons".....21

"Pinocchio came to the house in the woods".....23

"God of mischief, of many faces and locations".....25

"Customized Me".....27

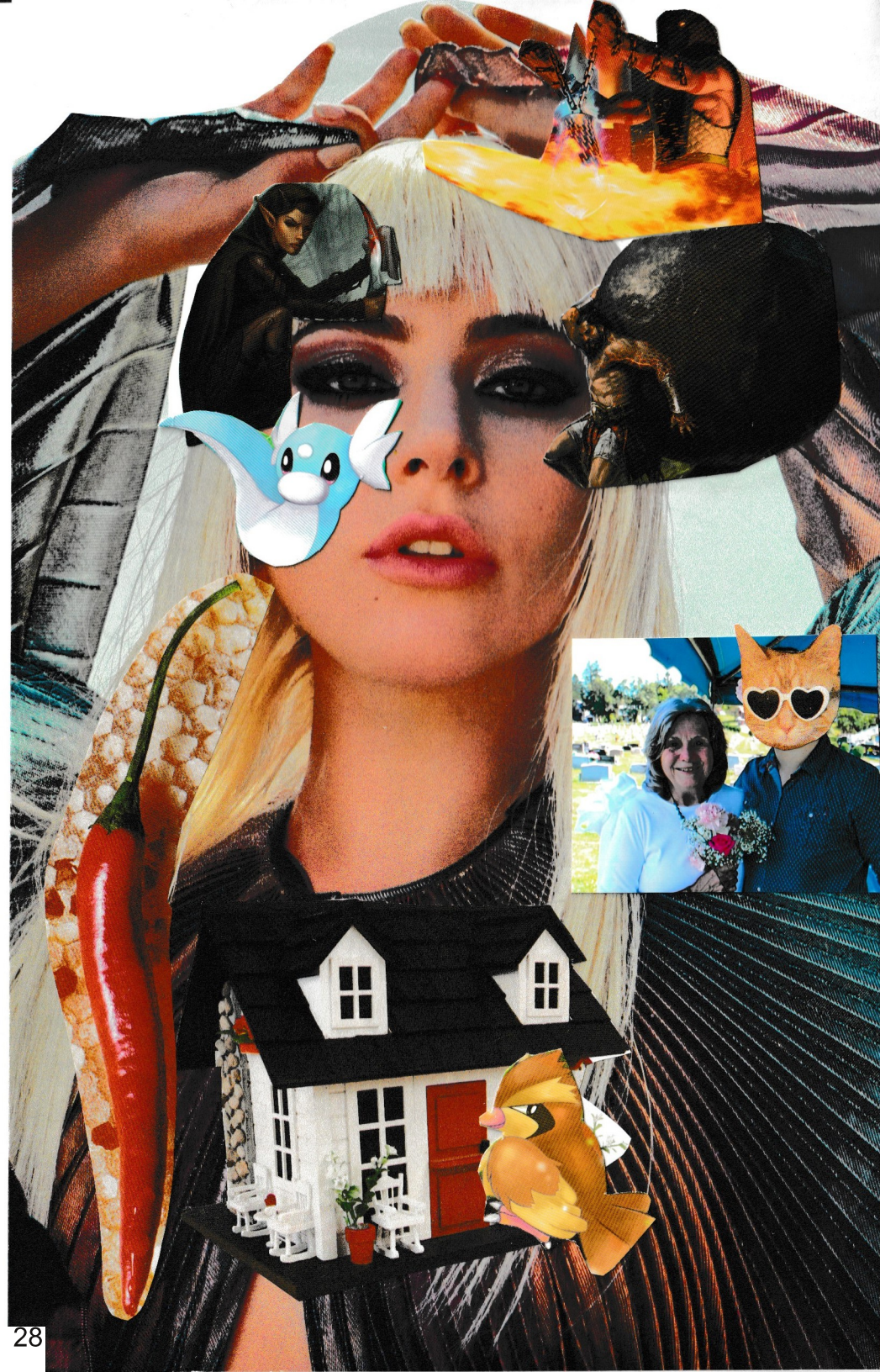
"Great grandma once told me about the mine".....29

Author's Note.....31



**HE COUNTS ON HIS
FINGERS.** Five, maybe
six.

Great grandma once told me about the mine
fire near Frostburg where she was born
It burned for over a century, or so it said in a
1987 Washington Post article.
You could cook an egg on the ground, or the
leaping steam and boiling streams
I think it was a part of her soul, that kept her
burning a hundred years as well
In the bosom of mother mountain, after the
flames drove the miners away
And her children, to the states beyond that
sliver of Western Maryland
She said you could see Pennsylvania or
Virginia hills, depending which way you faced
She lived in Cumberland, Maryville,
Cresaptown, but the family house sold off
My uncle said he'd move back one day, but he
wasn't well enough to go for the funeral
He left an old house-full junk mine for my nana
to unearth. She buried him and their mom
All that weight slid down the slopes like rainfall
to her, the Appalachian Sisyphus
Nana said that was the last time she would go
home, none of her kin remain
When I pass through, I hear the hills
whispering, a welcome or a warning
A wanting, weary from waiting, for what exactly,
the warden of that fire's prison



Strawberry rhubarb pie slice
I take a bite while I watch the flickering
jack-o'-lantern with your carved silhouette
An echo of you, a shadow puppet
I wonder if you will smell of milk and spit up
or fruity no tears baby shampoo
Will you be warm as a pie
resting against my skin
Though you are still baking
I can't wait to meet your oozy self
hold your delicate crust

SMALL

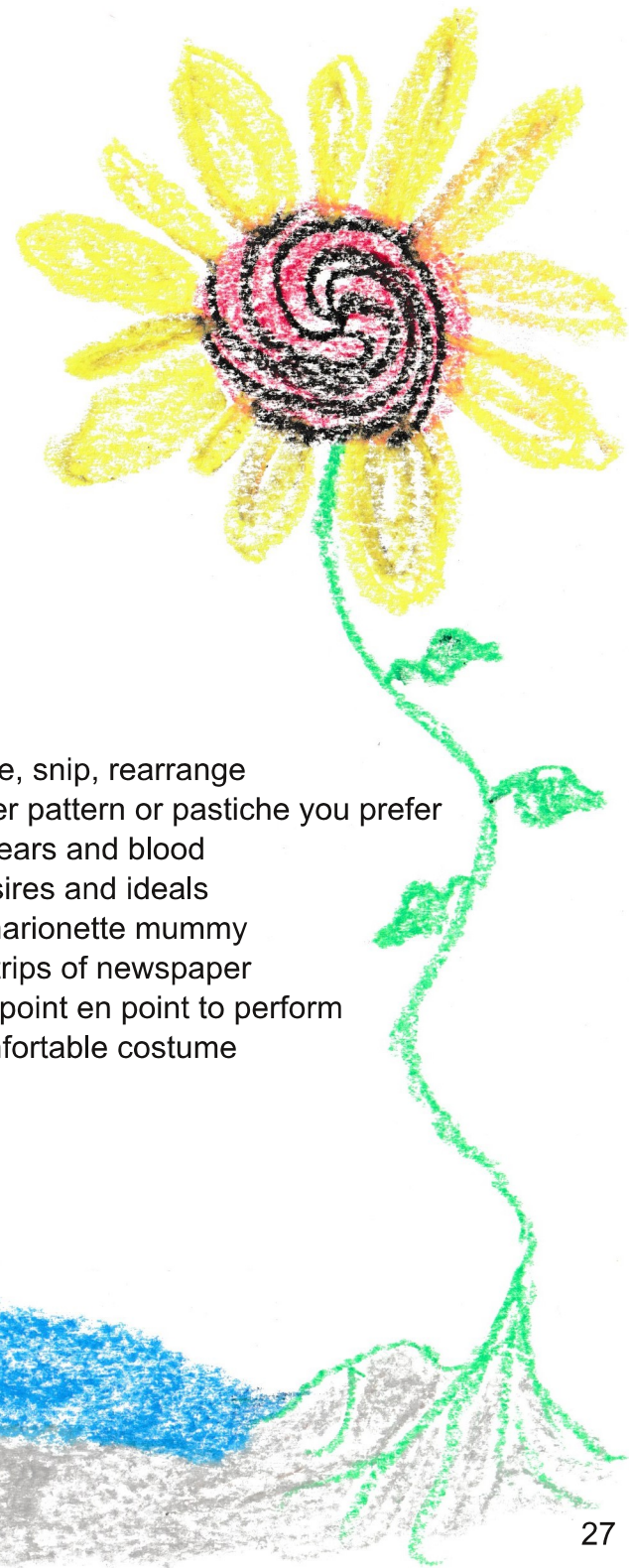
Your hands struggle to get fruit into your mouth
I can see you trying, but the pieces slip right
from your grasp. My hands pick them back up
Place in yours again, or just in your mouth
So you know the fruit of your labors
Under your baby rolls is a skeleton
The same wrist bones that I broke before
Fingers slap, grab, push and scratch me
Wrap around my big finger, your little ones

MY



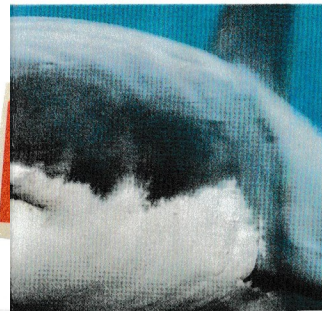
HANDS


REMEMBER



Customized Me

Take a part of me, snip, rearrange
Paste in whatever pattern or pastiche you prefer
Whiteout the smears and blood
Write in your desires and ideals
Make me your marionette mummy
Modpodged in strips of newspaper
Me, your talking point en point to perform
Customized comfortable costume





MUSIC

Travels

Loom

Together

When I toss you into the air, I catch you
I won't do it if I can't feel
the space between us
The physical mechanics are consistent
What goes up, comes down
Your weight is the same
My hands remember you



Fiery Fire Fiery Fire
Fiery Fury Fiery Fire
Fiery Fire Blaze

"They started it."

SRY IT
SRY IT

God of mischief, of many faces and locations
Summoning from the void whatever tool is needed
Rabbit of mortal terror, trickery beguiles your
enemies
No harm can touch your shifting shape
Mastery of wigs, heels, lipstick, eyeliner
Hearts swoon, shoot out of eyeballs
Fall prostrate before your power, you divine
Bless us with your fuckery, Bugs Bunny

UGH HHHH

controls
you losing
your mind.

Unpredictable as a storm and
destructive as a tidal wave.

WHAT?

THEN ...

ARE
YOU **SURE** YOU
DON'T NEED **ANY**
HELP?

I'M JUST
THINKIN'
ABOUT
Treason

The tiny survive with guile.

THE MIGHTY
Rogue

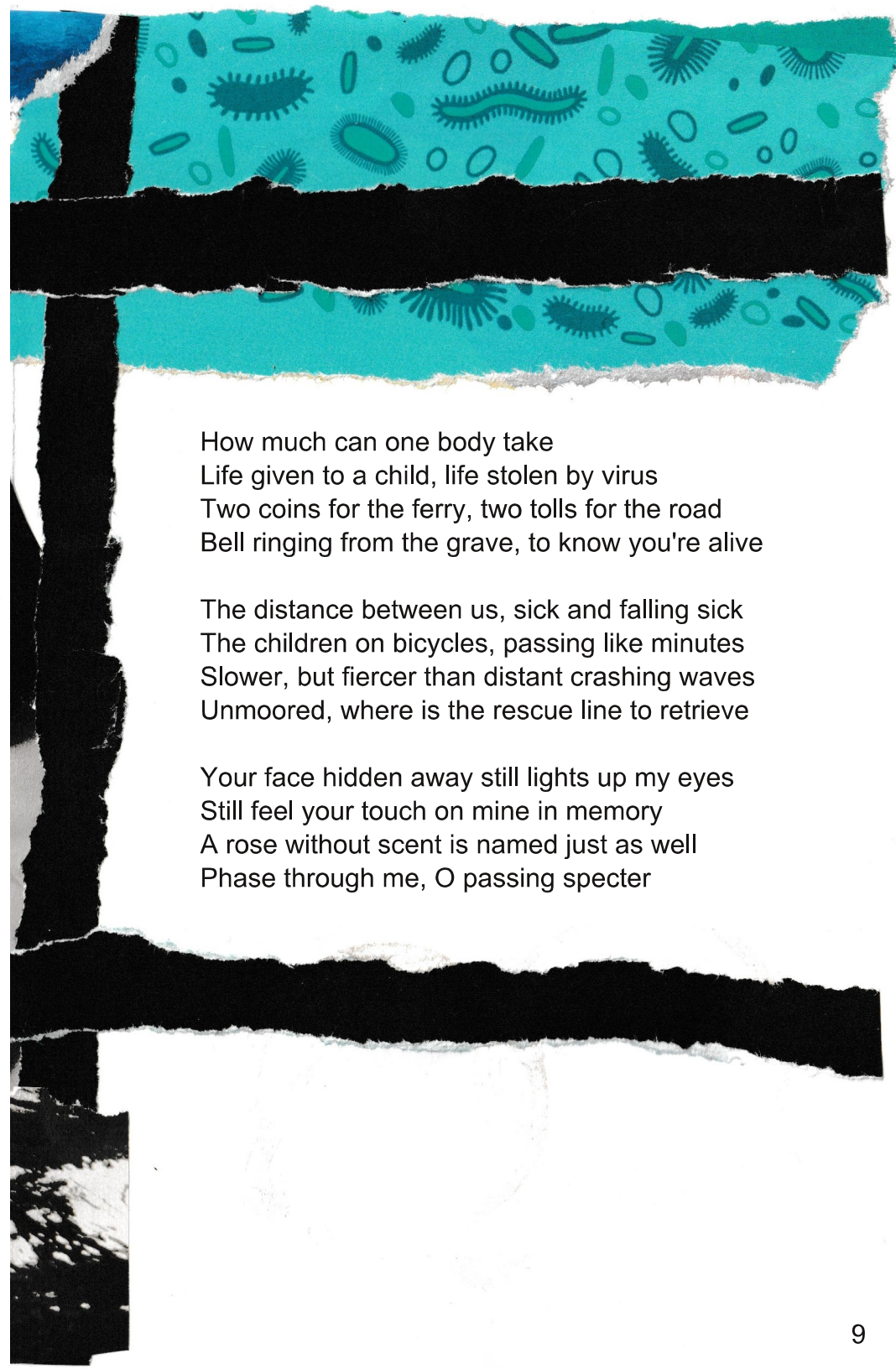
ARE YOU
DONE?

food

SAY IT
SAY IT

Screeching


RATS



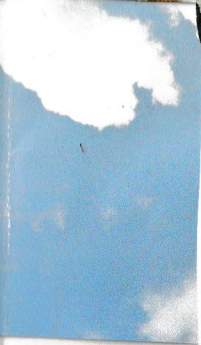
How much can one body take
Life given to a child, life stolen by virus
Two coins for the ferry, two tolls for the road
Bell ringing from the grave, to know you're alive

The distance between us, sick and falling sick
The children on bicycles, passing like minutes
Slower, but fiercer than distant crashing waves
Unmoored, where is the rescue line to retrieve


Your face hidden away still lights up my eyes
Still feel your touch on mine in memory
A rose without scent is named just as well
Phase through me, O passing specter




Pinocchio came to the house in the woods
desperate to survive his attackers
the girl with turquoise hair could not help him
she was already dead, waiting for her coffin



Barely alive, he is carried inside
drink the medicine, the water of the soil
it is bitter, he rejects it, but you must
your living wood return to roots



Fair maiden nymph could not be caught
by traps of farmers desiring hero sons
nor the King of Fauns, nor God of tricksters
could pursue her up the winemaker's hill



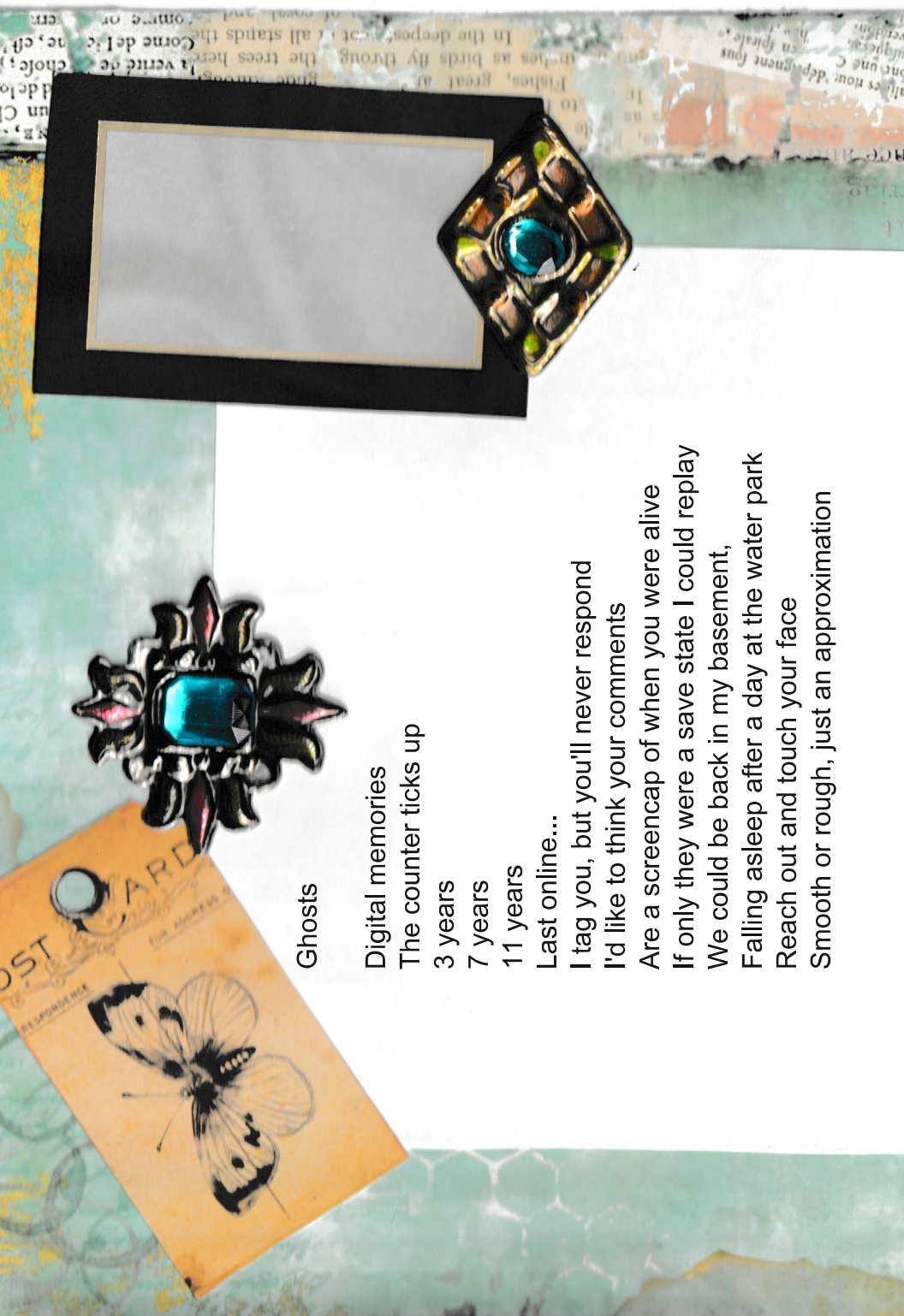
Though the north wind blew against her
she remembered the sybil's premonition
there she hid away in the walls of trees
her body transformed to trunk and bough

Feel the sunlight in the veins of your leaves
the breeze combing through the sky blue
survive three thousand years, O you
the last pine of the hilltop, in shape of boy

Drink up, remember my mind, live now
hearse of my spirit, child who shall grow
like the ones who climbed and rested under
run and be free as you did in another life



The tendon on my wrist is bulging
Is this what motherhood is?
Desperately trying to get my son
Food, milk, clean clothes and play space
While my limbs betray me
Can't afford to see the doctor
Time, money, childcare, good graces



Ghosts

Digital memories

The counter ticks up

3 years

7 years

11 years

Last online...

I tag you, but you'll never respond

I'd like to think your comments

Are a screencap of when you were alive

If only they were a save state I could replay

We could be back in my basement,

Falling asleep after a day at the water park

Reach out and touch your face

Smooth or rough, just an approximation

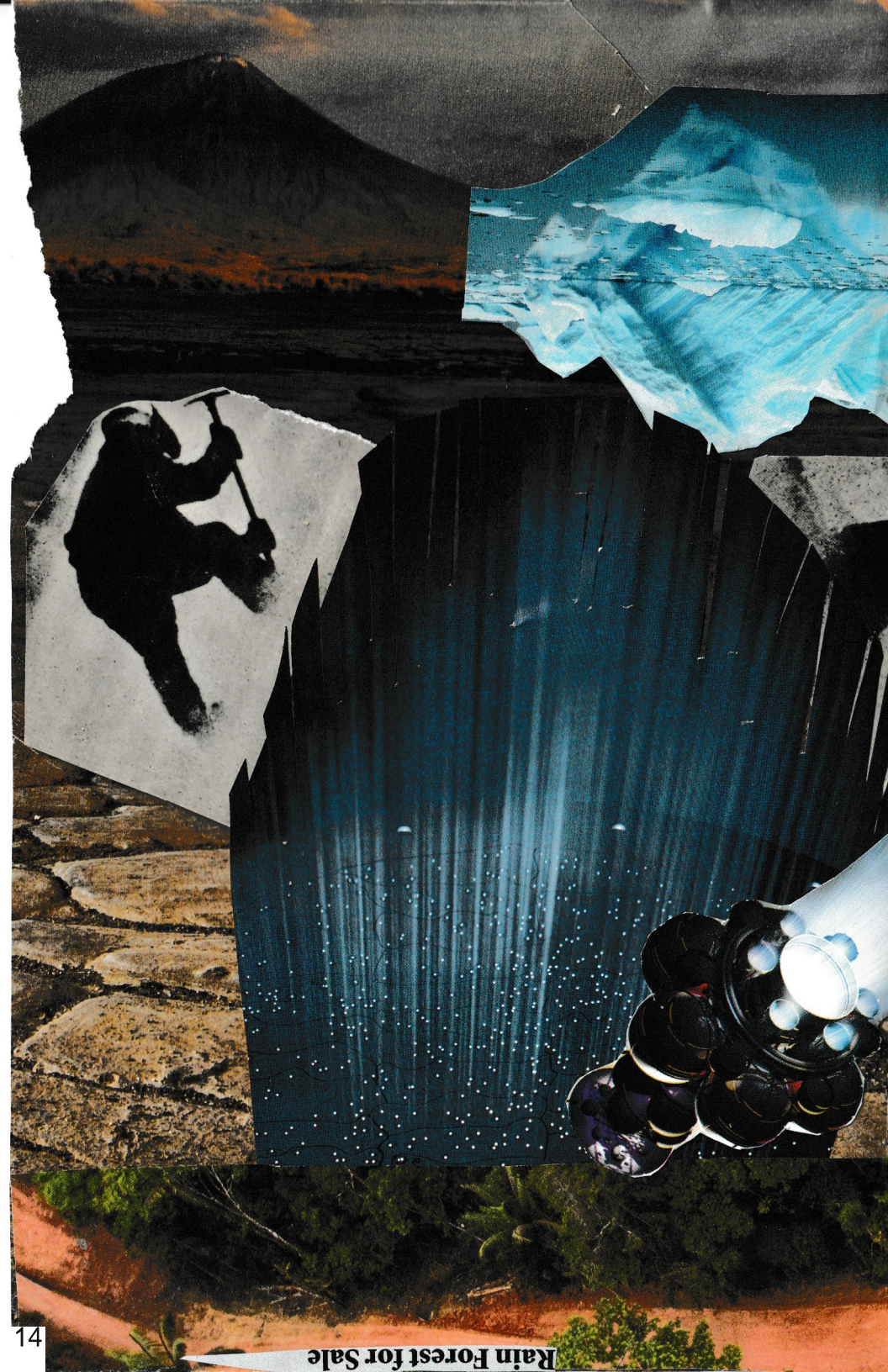


Gather the loose buttons
Hold them close to your heart
For all the broken garments
And the projects not yet done
Sweep up the thread trimmings
The fuzzies and dust bunnies
The toxic threads of thought
Stitched into your skin



Embrace you, bury my face in you
 What did you smell like that day?
 Chlorine and sweat
 Phone screen
 The wall separating us from the past
 I loved you so dearly, I was afraid
 To break that image of you in my head
 But I wish desperately there could have been
 more
 7 years of tactile, auditory, motion capture
 Please don't stop haunting me





Cut!
The directors says
Her neckline is too high
She is just an object to pose
Cut!
One fewer line
Her wages even smaller
Royalties swept by the stream



The Dust of the Journey

My pilgrimage ended in disillusionment.
My piety destroyed the church.
My crusade felled my ally.
My desert led to exile.
My crops poisoned my people.
All I do returns like a bounced check.

*The ant stores up for the winter,
The grasshopper lays its eggs and dies.
Neither is more venerable.*



The conch overtakes other snails,
writhing and devouring with skill,
Even starfish deftly hunt their quarry,
without a brain;

I travel to the mountain and return with a curse.
I am crippled by a marble-sized cyst.
Disjointed hopes, like roots in the ground,
strain for want

My arm compulsively raised in salute
rockets trail burnt ochre scars through the sky
in unison, the symphony of our demise.

*The dust of the journey...
If only I could show you its true value.*



